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Contents of McClure's Magazine.

VOLUME X.

NOVEMBER, 1897, TO APRIL, 1898.

PAGE

ADAMS, JOHN QUINCY, THE DEATH OF. A Personal Recollection. General John M. Thayer 126

AMERICA, A FRENCH CRITIC'S IMPRESSIONS OF. Ferdinand Brunetière 67

AMERICAN, AN, AT KARLSBAD. Cy Warman. *Illustrated* 205

ANDRÉE PARTY, LETTERS FROM THE. The Balloon Expedition to the Pole. *Illustrated* 411

ASIA, IN UNEXPLORED. Discoveries and Adventures of Dr. Sven Hedin. R. H. Sherard. *Illustrated* 180

BRAKEMAN, A, IN THE YARD AND ON THE ROAD. A Narrative of Personal Experiences. Herbert E. Hamblen. *Illustrated* 211

BROWN, JOHN, REMINISCENCES OF. Daniel B. Hadley 278

CHRISTMAS NIGHT. Painting by F. S. Church 179

CIVIL WAR PHOTOGRAPHS, THE GOVERNMENT COLLECTION OF. General A. W. Greely 18

CLEMENS, SAMUEL L. "MARK TWAIN." A Character Sketch. Robert Barr 246

DANA, CHARLES A.: AN EDITORIAL NOTE 193

DE MONVEL, BOUTET. A Painter of Children. Norman Hapgood. *Illustrated* 197

DREAMERS. A Poem. Rosalie M. Jonas. *Illustrated* 32

EDISON'S REVOLUTION IN IRON MINING. Theodore Waters. *Illustrated* 75

EDITORIAL NOTES 289, 385, 482

FICTION: Short Stories.

ACCORDIN' TO SOLOMON. Mary M. Mears 282

ARCHBISHOP'S, THE, CHRISTMAS GIFT. Robert Barr. *Illustrated* 143

BRIDE, THE, COMES TO YELLOW SKY. Stephen Crane. *Illustrated* 377

CUPID'S MESSENGER. Gertrude Adams. *Illustrated* 571

DAY, THE, OF THE DOG. Morgan Robertson. *Illustrated* 534

DOMINOES, THE ROW OF. Frank Crane. *Illustrated* 525

EXPERIMENT IN BURGLARY, AN. H. Hobart Nichols. *Illustrated* 404

INCIDENT, THE, OF THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR. Bliss Perry 165

"KING FOR A DAY." W. A. Fraser 505

LONG LADDER, THE. Robert Barr. *Illustrated* 226

OTTENHAUSEN'S COUP. John Walker Harrington. *Illustrated* 475

SAIRY SPENCER'S REVOLT. Carrie Blake Morgan. *Illustrated* 268

SWEETHEARTS AND WIVES. Anna A. Rogers 54

TOMB, THE, OF HIS ANCESTORS. Rudyard Kipling. *Illustrated* 99

TWENTIETH CENTURY WOMAN, A. Ella Higginson. *Illustrated* 60

UNJUST ACCUSATION, AN. Robert Barr. *Illustrated* 47

WEE TAY TABLE, THE. Shan F. Bullock. *Illustrated* 306

FIRING A LOCOMOTIVE. A Narrative of Personal Experiences. Herbert E. Hamblen. *Illustrated* 361

FREIGHT ENGINEER, ADVENTURES OF A. A Narrative of Personal Experiences. Herbert E. Hamblen. *Illustrated* 389

FRENCH CRITIC'S, A, IMPRESSIONS OF AMERICA. Ferdinand Brunetière 67

GAY GORDONS, THE. Dargai, October, 20, 1897. A Poem. Henry Newbolt 497

GEORGE'S, HENRY, LAST BOOK. Hamlin Garland 386

GORDON HIGHLANDERS, STORIES OF THE. Charles Lowe. *Illustrated* 485

GRANT AND WARD FAILURE, THE. A Romance of Wall Street. Hamlin Garland. *Illustrated* 498

HALCYON DAYS. A Poem. Walt Whitman 93

PAGE

HYMNS THAT HAVE HELPED. W. T. STEAD. 172

INCIDENT, AN, OF '49. JAMES H. HOLMES. *Illustrated* 251

INDIA, FROM, TO SOUTH AFRICA. THE DIARY OF A VOYAGE. MARK TWAIN. *Illustrated* 3

IRON MINING, EDISON'S REVOLUTION IN. THEODORE WATERS. *Illustrated* 75

IS THERE A SANTA CLAUS? *Illustrated* 192

KARLSBAD, AN AMERICAN AT. CY WARMAN. *Illustrated* 205

KLONDIKE! HO FOR THE. THE VARIOUS WAYS IN.—WHERE THE GOLD IS FOUND. HAMLIN GARLAND. *Illustrated* 443

LIFE IS STRUGGLE. A POEM. ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH 96

LINCOLN, SOME GREAT PORTRAITS OF. IDA M. TARBELL. *Illustrated* 339

MADONNAS, THREE FAMOUS.

VIRGIN ADORING THE INFANT CHRIST. PERUGINO 121
MADONNA AND CHILD, AND ST. JOHN. BOTTICELLI 122
MADONNA AND CHILD ("THE MADONNA OF THE GRAND DUKE"). RAPHAEL 123

MIRROR, THE. A POEM. MARGARET F. MAURO 277

MODERN MIRACLE, A. H. G. PROUT. *Illustrated* 45

PAINTER, A, OF CHILDREN—BOUTET DE MONVEL. NORMAN HAPGOOD. *Illustrated* 197

PASSENGER ENGINEER, ADVERSITIES OF A. A NARRATIVE OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCES. HERBERT E. HAMBLEN. *Illustrated* 513

POLAR EXPLORATION, FUTURE NORTH. DR. FRIDTJOF NANSEN. *Illustrated* 293

PRIZE DRAWINGS:

A TYPE OF AMERICAN HEAD. PAINTED BY MISS LILLIE O'RYAN 94
A TYPE OF AMERICAN HEAD. DRAWN BY J. HARRISON MILLS 95

RAILROAD MAN, THE LIFE OF THE. DRAWN FROM FIFTEEN YEARS' EXPERIENCE. HERBERT E. HAMBLEN.

A BRAKEMAN IN THE YARD AND ON THE ROAD. *Illustrated* 211
FIRING A LOCOMOTIVE. *Illustrated* 361
ADVENTURES OF A FREIGHT ENGINEER. *Illustrated* 389
ADVERSITIES OF A PASSENGER ENGINEER. *Illustrated* 513

RAILROADS, THE NATION'S. GEORGE B. WALDRON. *Illustrated* 557

REMINISCENCES OF MEN AND EVENTS OF THE CIVIL WAR. CHARLES A. DANA.

I. FROM THE "TRIBUNE" TO THE WAR DEPARTMENT. *Illustrated* 20
II. FROM MEMPHIS TO VICKSBURG.—THE VICKSBURG CAMPAIGN. *Illustrated* 150
III. LIFE IN THE TRENCHES AT VICKSBURG AND THE MEN IN COMMAND. *Illustrated* 253
IV. IN COUNCIL AND IN BATTLE WITH ROSECRANS AND THOMAS.—A VISIT TO BURNSIDE AT KNOXVILLE. *Illustrated* 347
V. THE BATTLE OF CHATTANOOGA.—IN THE WAR DEPARTMENT WITH STANTON. *Illustrated* 431
VI. MR. LINCOLN AND HIS CABINET. *Illustrated* 561

RUPERT OF HENTZAU. A NOVEL. Chapters I.–XIV. ANTHONY HOPE. *Illustrated* 128, 235, 322, 455, 546

SAY NOT THE STRUGGLE NOUGHT AVAILETH. A POEM. ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH 96

SOUTH AFRICA, TO, FROM INDIA. THE DIARY OF A VOYAGE. MARK TWAIN. *Illustrated* 3

ST. IVES. A NOVEL. CONCLUSION. ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSEN 33

STEVENSON'S GALLERY, THE LAST PORTRAIT IN. A POEM 290

TARBELL, IDA M. A PORTRAIT 427

TO R. T. H. B. A POEM. WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY 96

TRUCK SIX, AN ADVENTURE OF. A TRUE STORY OF A FIREMAN'S BRAVERY. RAY STANNARD BAKER 428

VESPERTINA QUIES. A PAINTING BY SIR EDWARD BURNE-JONES 267

WALL STREET, A ROMANCE OF. THE GRANT AND WARD FAILURE. HAMLIN GARLAND. *Illustrated* 498

WASHINGTON, GEORGE, THE LAST DAYS OF. FROM THE MANUSCRIPT DIARY OF HIS PRIVATE SECRETARY, COLONEL TOBIAS LEAR. *Illustrated* 315

WHERE IS ANDRÉE? WALTER WELLMAN. *Illustrated* 422

YET AM I NOT FOR PITY. A POEM. ELLA HIGGINSON. *Illustrated* 124

ST. IVES

THE ADVENTURES OF A FRENCH PRISONER IN ENGLAND.

By Robert Louis Stevenson,

Author of "Treasure Island," "Kidnapped," etc.

CONCLUSION.

CHAPTER XXVIII (*Continued*).

EVENTS OF MONDAY: THE LAWYER'S PARTY.

IT is a strange thing how young men in their teens go down at the mere wind of the coming of men of twenty-five and upwards! The vapid ones fled without thought of resistance before the major and me; a few dallied awhile in the neighborhood—so to speak, with their fingers in their mouths—but presently these also followed the rout, and we remained face to face before Flora. There was a draught in that corner by the door; she had thrown her pelisse over her bare arms and neck, and the dark fur of the trimming set them off. She shone by contrast; the light played on her smooth skin to admiration, and the color changed in her excited face. For the least fraction of a second she looked from one to the other of her rival swains, and seemed to hesitate. Then she addressed Chevenix:

"You are coming to the Assembly, of course, Major Chevenix?" said she.

"I fear not; I fear I shall be otherwise engaged," he replied. "Even the pleasure of dancing with you, Miss Flora, must give way to duty."

For awhile the talk ran harmlessly on the weather, and then branched off towards the war. It seemed to be by no one's fault; it was in the air, and had to come.

"Good news from the scene of operations," said the major.

"Good news while it lasts," I said. "But will Miss Gilchrist tell us her private thought upon the war? In her admiration for the victors, does not there mingle some pity for the vanquished?"

"Indeed, sir," she said, with animation, "only too much of it! War is a subject that I do not think should be talked of to a girl. I am, I have to be—what do you call it?—a non-combatant? And to remind me of what others have to do and suffer: no, it is not fair!"

"Miss Gilchrist has the tender female heart," said Chevenix.

"Do not be too sure of that!" she cried. "I would love to be allowed to fight, myself!"

"On which side?" I asked.

"Can you ask?" she exclaimed. "I am a Scottish girl!"

"She is a Scottish girl!" repeated the major, looking at me. "And no one grudges you her pity!"

"And I glory in every grain of it she has to spare," said I. "Pity is akin to love."

"Well, and let us put that question to Miss Gilchrist. It is for her to decide, and for us to bow to the decision. Is pity, Miss Flora, or is admiration, nearest love?"

"Oh, come," said I, "let us be more concrete. Lay before the lady a complete case: describe your man, then I'll describe *mine*, and Miss Flora shall decide."

"I think I see your meaning," said he, "and I'll try. You think that pity—and the kindred sentiments—have the greatest power upon the heart. I think more nobly of women. To my view, the man they love will first of all command their respect; he will be steadfast—proud, if you please; dry, possibly—but of all things steadfast. They will look at him in doubt; at last they will see that stern face which he presents to all the rest of the world soften to them alone. First, trust, I say. It is so that a woman loves who is worthy of heroes."

"Your man is very ambitious, sir," said I, "and very much of a hero! Mine is a humbler and, I would fain think, a more human dog. He is one with no particular trust in himself, with no superior steadfastness to be admired for, who sees a lady's face, who hears her voice, and, without

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any phrase about the matter, falls in love. What does he ask for, then, but pity?—pity for his weakness, pity for his love, which is his life. You would make women always the inferiors, gaping up at your imaginary lover; he, like a marble statue, with his nose in the air! But God has been wiser than you; and the most steadfast of your heroes may prove human, after all. We appeal to the queen for judgment," I added, turning and bowing before Flora.

"And how shall the queen judge?" she asked. "I must give you an answer that is no answer at all. 'The wind bloweth where it listeth': she goes where her heart goes." Her face flushed as she said it; mine also, for I read in it a declaration, and my heart swelled for joy. But Chevenix grew pale.

"You make of life a very dreadful kind of a lottery, ma'am," said he. "But I will not despair. Honest and unornamental is still my choice." And I must say he looked extremely handsome and very amusingly like the marble statue with its nose in the air to which I had compared him.

"I cannot imagine how we got upon this subject," said Flora.

"Madam, it was through the war," replied Chevenix.

"All roads lead to Rome," I commented. "What else would you expect Mr. Chevenix and myself to talk of?"

About this time I was conscious of a certain bustle and movement in the room behind me, but did not pay to it that degree of attention which perhaps would have been wise. There came a certain change in Flora's face; she signaled repeatedly with her fan; her eyes appealed to me obsequiously; there could be no doubt that she wanted something—as well as I could make out, that I should go away and leave the field clear for my rival, which I had not the least idea of doing. At last she rose from her chair with impatience. "I think it time you were saying good-night, Mr. Ducie!" she said. I could not in the least see why, and said so. Whereupon she gave me this appalling answer, "My aunt is coming out of the card-room." In less time than it takes to tell, I had made my bow and my escape.

Looking back from the doorway, I was privileged to see, for a moment, the august profile and gold eyeglasses of Miss Gilchrist issuing from the card-room; and the sight lent me wings. I stood not on the order of my going; and a moment after, I was on the pavement of Castle Street, and the lighted windows shone down on me, and were crossed by ironical shadows of those who had remained behind.

CHAPTER XXIX.

EVENTS ON TUESDAY: THE TOILS CLOSING.

This day began with a surprise. I found a letter on my breakfast-table addressed to Edward Ducie, Esquire; and at first I was startled beyond measure. "Conscience doth make cowards of us all!" When I had opened it, it proved to be only a note from the lawyer, enclosing a card for the Assembly Ball on Thursday evening. Shortly after, as I was composing my mind with a cigar at one of the windows of the sitting-room, and Rowley, having finished the light share of work that fell to him, sat not far off tootling with great spirit and a marked preference for the upper octave, Ronald was suddenly shown in. I got him a cigar, drew in a chair to the side of the fire, and installed him there—I was going to say, at his ease, but no expression could be farther from the truth. He was plainly on pins and needles, did not know whether to take or to refuse the cigar, and, after he had taken it, did not know whether to light or to return it. I saw he had something to say; I did not think it was his own something; and I was ready to offer a large bet it was really something of Major Chevenix's.

"Well, and so here you are!" I observed, with pointless cordiality, for I was bound I should do nothing to help him out. If he were, indeed, here running errands for my rival, he might have a fair field, but certainly no favor.

"The fact is," he began, "I would rather see you alone."

"Why, certainly," I replied. "Rowley, you can step into the bedroom. My dear fellow," I continued, "this sounds serious. Nothing wrong, I trust."

"Well, I'll be quite honest," said he. I *am* a good deal bothered."

"And I bet I know why!" I exclaimed. "And I bet I can put you to rights, too."

"What do you mean!" he asked.

"You must be hard up," said I, "and all I can say is, you've come to the right place. If you have the least use for a hundred pounds, or any such trifling sum as that, please mention it. It's here, quite at your service."

"I am sure it is most kind of you," said Ronald, "and the truth is, though I can't think how you guessed it, that I really *am* a little behind board. But I haven't come to talk about that."

"No, I daresay!" cried I. "Not worth talking about! But remember, Ronald, you and I are on different sides of the business. Remember that you did me one of those services that make men friends forever. And since I have had the fortune to come into a fair share of money, just oblige me, and consider so much of it as your own."

"No," he said, "I couldn't take it; I couldn't, really. Besides, the fact is, I've come on a very different matter. It's about my sister, St. Ives," and he shook his head menacingly at me.

"You're quite sure?" I persisted. "It's here, at your service—up to five hundred pounds, if you like. Well, all right; only remember where it is, when you do want it."

"Oh, please let me alone!" cried Ronald. "I've come to say something unpleasant; and how on earth can I do it, if you don't give a fellow a chance? It's about my sister, as I said. You can see for yourself that it can't be allowed to go on. It's compromising; it don't lead to anything; and you're not the kind of man (you must feel it yourself) that I can allow my female relatives to have anything to do with. I hate saying this, St. Ives; it looks like hitting a man when he's down, you know; and I told the major I very much disliked it from the first. However, it had to be said; and now it has been, and, between gentlemen, it shouldn't be necessary to refer to it again."

"It's compromising; it doesn't lead to anything; not the kind of man," I repeated thoughtfully. "Yes, I believe I understand, and shall make haste to put myself *en regle*." I stood up, and laid my cigar down. "Mr. Gilchrist," said I, with a bow, "in answer to your very natural observations, I beg to offer myself as a suitor for your sister's hand. I am a man of title, of which we think lightly in France, but of ancient lineage, which is everywhere prized. I can display thirty-two quarterings without a blot. My expectations are certainly above the average: I believe my uncle's income averages about thirty thousand pounds, though I admit I was not careful to inform myself. Put it anywhere between fifteen and fifty thousand; it is certainly not less."

"All this is very easy to say," said Ronald, with a pitying smile. "Unfortunately, these things are in the air."

"Pardon me—in Buckinghamshire," said I, smiling.

"Well, what I mean is, my dear St. Ives, that you *can't prove* them," he continued. "They might just as well not be: do you follow me? You can't bring us any third party to back you up."

"Oh, come!" cried I, springing up and hurrying to the table. "You must excuse me!" I wrote Romaine's address. "There is my reference, Mr. Gilchrist. Until you have written to him, and received his negative answer, I have a right to be treated, and I shall see that you treat me, as a gentleman." He was brought up with a round turn at that.

"I beg your pardon, St. Ives," said he. "Believe me, I had no wish to be offensive. But there's the difficulty of this affair; I can't make any of my points without offence! You must excuse me, it's not my fault. But, at any rate, you must see for yourself this proposal of marriage is—is merely impossible, my dear fellow. It's nonsense! Our countries are at war; you are a prisoner."

"My ancestor of the time of the Ligue," I replied, "married a Huguenot lady out of the Saintonge, riding two hundred miles through an enemy's country to bring off his bride; and it was a happy marriage."

"Well!" he began; and then looked down into the fire, and became silent.

"Well?" I asked.

"Well, there's this business of—Goguelat," said he, still looking at the coals in the grate.

"What!" I exclaimed, starting in my chair. "What's that you say?"

"This business about Goguelat," he repeated.

"Ronald," said I, "this is not your doing. These are not your own words. I know where they came from: a coward put them in your mouth."

"St. Ives!" he cried, "why do you make it so hard for me? and where's the use of insulting other people? The plain English is, that I can't hear of any proposal of marriage from a man under a charge like that. You must see it for yourself, man! It's the most absurd thing I ever heard of! And you go on forcing me to argue with you, too!"

"Because I have had an affair of honor which terminated unhappily, you—a young soldier, or next-door to it—refuse my

offer? Do I understand you aright?" said I.

"My dear fellow!" he wailed, "of course you can twist my words, if you like. You *say* it was an affair of honor. Well, I can't, of course tell you that—I can't—I mean, you must see that that's just the point! Was it? I don't know."

"I have the honor to inform you," said I.

"Well, other people say the reverse, you see!"

"They lie, Ronald, and I will prove it in time."

"The short and long of it is, that any man who is so unfortunate as to have such things said about him is not the man to be my brother-in-law," he cried.

"Do you know who will be my first witness at the court? Arthur Chevenix!" said I.

"I don't care!" he cried, rising from his chair and beginning to pace outrageously about the room. "What do you mean, St. Ives? What is this about? It's like a dream, I declare! You made an offer, and I have refused it. I don't like it, I don't want it; and whatever I did, or didn't, wouldn't matter—my aunt wouldn't hear of it, anyway! Can't you take your answer, man?"

"You must remember, Ronald, that we are playing with edged tools," said I. "An offer of marriage is a delicate subject to handle. You have refused, and you have justified your refusal by several statements. First, that I was an impostor; second, that our countries were at war; and third—no, I will speak," said I; "you can answer when I have done,—and third, that I had dishonorably killed—or was said to have done so—the man Goguelat. Now, my dear fellow, these are very awkward grounds to be taking. From any one else's lips I need scarce tell you how I should resent them; but my hands are tied. I have so much gratitude for you, without talking of the love I bear your sister, that you insult me, when you do so, under the cover of a complete impunity. I must feel the pain—and I do feel it acutely—I can do nothing to protect myself."

He had been anxious enough to interrupt me in the beginning; but now, and after I had ceased, he stood a long while silent.

"St. Ives," he said at last, "I think I had better go away. This has been very irritating. I never at all meant to say anything of the kind, and I apologize to you. I have all the esteem for you that one gentleman should have for another. I only meant to tell you—to show you what had influenced my mind; and that, in short, the thing was impossible. One thing you may be quite sure of: *I* shall do nothing against you. Will you shake hands before I go away?" he blurted out.

"Yes," said I, "I agree with you—the interview has been irritating. Let bygones be bygones. Good-by, Ronald."

"Good-by, St. Ives!" he returned. "I'm heartily sorry."

And with that he was gone.

The windows of my own sitting-room looked toward the north; but the entrance passage drew its light from the direction of the square. Hence I was able to observe Ronald's departure, his very disheartened gait, and the fact that he was joined, about half-way, by no less a man than Major Chevenix. At this, I could scarce keep from smiling; so unpalatable an interview must be before the pair of them, and I could hear their voices, clashing like crossed swords, in that eternal antiphony of "I told you," and "I told you not." Without doubt, they had gained very little by their visit; but then I had gained less than nothing, and had been bitterly dispirited into the bargain. Ronald had stuck to his guns and refused me to the last. It was no news; but, on the other hand, it could not be contorted into good news. I was now certain that during my temporary absence in France, all irons would be put into the fire, and the world turned upside down, to make Flora disown the obtrusive Frenchman and accept Chevenix. Without doubt she would resist these instances; but the thought of them did not please me, and I felt she should be warned and prepared for the battle.

It was no use to try and see her now, but I promised myself early that evening to return to Swanston. In the meantime I had to make all my preparations, and look the coming journey in the face. Here in Edinburgh I was within four miles of the sea, yet the business of approaching random fishermen with my hat in one hand and a knife in the other, appeared so desperate, that I saw nothing for it but to retrace my steps over the northern counties, and knock a second time at the doors of Birchell Fenn. To do this, money would be necessary; and after leaving my paper in the hands of Flora I had still a balance of about fifteen hundred pounds. Or rather I may say I had them and I had them not:

for after my luncheon with Mr. Robbie I had placed the amount, all but thirty pounds of change, in a bank in George Street, on a deposit receipt in the name of Mr. Rowley. This I had designed to be my gift to him, in case I must suddenly depart. But now, thinking better of the arrangement, I had despatched my little man, cockade and all, to lift the fifteen hundred.

He was not long gone, and returned with a flushed face and the deposit receipt still in his hand.

"No go," Mr. Anne," says he.

"How's that?" I inquired.

"Well, sir, I found the place all right, and no mistake," said he. "But I tell you wot gave me a blue fright! There was a customer standing by the door, and I reckonized him! Who do you think it was, Mr. Anne? W'y, that same Red-Breast—him I had breakfast with near Aylesbury."

"You are sure you are not mistaken?" I asked.

"Certain sure," he replied. "Not Mr. Lavender, I don't mean, sir; I mean the other party. 'Wot's he doin' here?' says I. 'It don't look right.'"

"Not by any means," I agreed.

I walked to and fro in the apartment reflecting. This particular Bow Street runner might be here by accident; but it was to imagine a singular play of coincidence that he, who had met Rowley and spoken with him in the "Green Dragon," hard by Aylesbury, should be now in Scotland, where he could have no legitimate business, and by the doors of the bank where Rowley kept his account.

"Rowley," said I, "he didn't see you, did he?"

"Never a fear," quoth Rowley. "W'y, Mr. Anne, sir, if he 'ad you wouldn't have seen *me* any more! I ain't a hass, sir!"

"Well, my boy, you can put that receipt in your pocket. You'll have no more use for it till you're quite clear of me. Don't lose it, though; it's your share of the Christmas-box: fifteen hundred pounds all for yourself."

"Begging your pardon, Mr. Anne, sir, but wot for?" said Rowley.

"To set up a public-house upon," said I.

"If you'll excuse me, sir, I ain't got any call to set up a public-house, sir," he replied, stoutly. "And I tell you wot, sir, it seems to me I'm reether young for the billet. I'm your body-servant, Mr. Anne, or else I'm nothink."

"Well, Rowley," I said, "I'll tell you what it's for. It's for the good service you have done me, of which I don't care—and don't dare—to speak. It's for your loyalty and cheerfulness, my dear boy. I had meant it for you; but to tell you the truth, it's past mending now—it has to be yours. Since that man is waiting by the bank, the money can't be touched until I'm gone."

"Until you're gone, sir?" reëchoed Rowley. "You don't go anywheres without me, I can tell you that, Mr. Anne, sir!"

"Yes, my boy," said I, "we are going to part very soon now; probably to-morrow. And it's for my sake, Rowley! Depend upon it, if there was any reason at all for that Bow Street man being at the bank, he was not there to look out for *you*. How they could have found out about the account so early is more than I can fathom; some strange coincidence must have played me false! But there the fact is; and, Rowley, I'll not only have to say farewell to you presently, I'll have to ask you to stay indoors until I can say it. Remember, my boy, it's only so that you can serve me now."

"W'y, sir, you say the word, and of course I'll do it!" he cried. "'Nothink by 'alves,' is my motto! I'm your man, through thick and thin, live or die, I am!"

In the meantime there was nothing to be done till towards sunset. My only chance now was to come again as quickly as possible to speech of Flora, who was my only practicable banker; and not before evening was it worth while to think of that. I might compose myself as well as I was able over the "Caledonian Mercury," with its ill news of the campaign of France and belated documents about the retreat from Russia; and, as I sat there by the fire, I was sometimes all awake with anger and mortification at what I was reading, and sometimes again I would be three parts asleep as I dozed over the barren items of home intelligence. "Lately arrived"—this is what I suddenly stumbled on—"at Dumbreck's Hotel, the Viscount of Saint-Yves."

"Rowley," said I.

"If you please, Mr. Anne, sir," answered the obsequious, lowering his pipe.

"Come and look at this, my boy," said I, holding out the paper.

"My crikey!" said he. "That's 'im, sure enough!"

"Sure enough, Rowley," said I. "He's on the trail. He has fairly caught up with

us. He and his Bow Street man have come together, I would swear. And now here is the whole field, quarry, hounds, and hunters, all together in this city of Edinburgh."

"And wot are you goin' to do now, sir? Tell you wot, let me take it in 'and, please! Gimme a minute, and I'll disguise myself, and go out to this Dum—to this hotel, leastways, sir—and see wot he's up to. You put your trust in me, Mr. Anne: I'm fly, don't you make no mistake about it. I'm all a-growing and a-blowing, I am."

"Not one foot of you," said I. "You are a prisoner, Rowley, and make up your mind to that. So am I, or next door to it. I showed it you for a caution; if you go on the streets, it spells death to me, Rowley."

"If you please, sir," says Rowley.

"Come to think of it," I continued, "you must take a cold, or something. No good of awakening Mrs. McRankine's suspicions."

"A cold?" he cried, recovering immediately from his depression. "I can do it, Mr. Anne."

And he proceeded to sneeze and cough and blow his nose, till I could not restrain myself from smiling.

"Oh, I tell you, I know a lot of them dodges," he observed proudly.

"Well, they come in very handy," said I.

"I'd better go at once and show it to the old gal, 'adn't I?" he asked.

I told him, by all means; and he was gone upon the instant, gleeful as though to a game of football.

I took up the paper, and read carelessly on, my thoughts engaged with my immediate danger, till I struck on the next paragraph:

"In connection with the recent horrid murder in the Castle, we are desired to make public the following intelligence. The soldier, Champdivers, is supposed to be in the neighborhood of this city. He is about the middle height or rather under, of a pleasing appearance and highly genteel address. When last heard of he wore a fashionable suit of pearl gray, and boots with fawn-colored tops. He is accompanied by a servant about sixteen years of age, speaks English without any accent, and passed under the *alias* of Ramornie. A reward is offered for his apprehension."

In a moment I was in the next room, stripping from me the pearl-colored suit!

I confess I was now a good deal agitated. It is difficult to watch the toils closing slowly and surely about you and to retain your composure; and I was glad that Rowley was not present to spy on my confusion. I was flushed, my breath came thick; I cannot remember a time when I was more put out.

And yet I must wait and do nothing, and partake of my meals, and entertain the ever-garrulous Rowley, as though I were entirely my own man. And if I did not require to entertain Mrs. McRankine also, that was but another drop of bitterness in my cup! For what ailed my landlady, that she should hold herself so severely aloof, that she should refuse conversation, that her eyes should be reddened, that I should so continually hear the voice of her private supplications sounding through the house? I was much deceived, or she had read the insidious paragraph and recognized the comminated pearl-gray suit. I remembered now a certain air with which she had laid the paper on my table, and a certain sniff, between sympathy and defiance, with which she had announced it: "There's your 'Mercury' for ye!"

In this direction, at least, I saw no pressing danger; her tragic countenance betokened agitation; it was plain she was wrestling with her conscience, and the battle still hung dubious. The question of what to do troubled me extremely. I could not venture to touch such an intricate and mysterious piece of machinery as my landlady's spiritual nature; it might go off at a word, and in any direction, like a badly-made firework. And while I praised myself extremely for my wisdom in the past, that I had made so much a friend of her, I was all abroad as to my conduct in the present. There seemed an equal danger in pressing and in neglecting the accustomed marks of familiarity. The one extreme looked like impudence, and might annoy; the other was a practical confession of guilt. Altogether it was a good hour for me when the dusk began to fall in earnest on the streets of Edinburgh and the voice of an early watchman bade me set forth.

I reached the neighborhood of the cottage before seven; and as I breasted the steep ascent which leads to the garden wall, I was struck with surprise to hear a dog. Dogs I had heard before, but only from the hamlet on the hillside above. Now, this dog was in the garden itself, where it roared aloud in paroxysms of fury, and I could hear it leaping and straining on the chain. I waited some while, until the brute's fit of passion had

roared itself out. Then, with the utmost precaution, I drew near again, and finally approached the garden wall. So soon as I had clapped my head above the level, however, the barking broke forth again with redoubled energy. Almost at the same time, the door of the cottage opened, and Ronald and the major appeared upon the threshold with a lantern. As they so stood, they were almost immediately below me, strongly illuminated, and within easy earshot. The major pacified the dog, who took instead to low, uneasy growling intermingled with occasional yelps.

"Good thing I brought Towzer!" said Chevenix.

"Damn him, I wonder where he is!" said Ronald; and he moved the lantern up and down, and turned the night into a shifting puzzle-work of gleam and shadow.

"I think I'll make a sally."

"I don't think you will," replied Chevenix. "When I agreed to come out here and do sentry-go, it was on one condition, Master Ronald: don't you forget that! Military discipline, my boy! Our beat is this path close about the house. Down, Towzer! good boy, good boy—gently, then!" he went on, caressing his confounded monster.

"To think! The beggar may be hearing us this minute!" cried Ronald.

"Nothing more probable," said the major. "You there, St. Ives?" he added, in a distinct but guarded voice. "I only want to tell you, you had better go home. Mr. Gilchrist and I take watch and watch."

The game was up. "*Beaucoup de plaisir!*" I replied, in the same tones. "*Il fait un peu froid pour veiller; gardez-vous des engelures!*"

I suppose it was done in a moment of ungovernable rage; but in spite of the excellent advice he had given to Ronald the moment before, Chevenix slipped the chain, and the dog sprang, straight as an arrow, up the bank. I stepped back, picked up a stone of about twelve pounds' weight, and stood ready. With a bound the beast landed on the cope-stone of the wall; and, almost in the same instant, my missile caught him fair in the face. He gave a stifled cry, went tumbling back where he had come from, and I could hear the twelve-pounder accompany him in his fall. Chevenix, at the same moment, broke out in a roaring voice: "The hell-hound! If he's killed my dog!" and I judged, upon all grounds, it was as well to be off.

CHAPTER XXX.

EVENTS OF WEDNESDAY: THE UNIVERSITY OF CRAMOND.

I AWOKE to much diffidence, even to a feeling that might be called the beginnings of panic, and lay for hours in my bed considering the situation. Seek where I pleased, there was nothing to encourage me, and plenty to appal. They kept a close watch about the cottage; they had a beast of a watch-dog—at least, unless I had settled it; and if I had, I knew its bereaved master would only watch the more indefatigably for the loss. In the pardonable ostentation of love I had given all the money I could spare to Flora; I had thought it glorious that the hunted exile should come down, like Jupiter, in a shower of gold, and pour thousands in the lap of the beloved. Then I had in an hour of arrant folly buried what remained to me in a bank in George Street. And now I must get back the one or the other; and which? and how?

As I tossed in my bed, I could see three possible courses, all extremely perilous. First, Rowley might have been mistaken; the bank might not be watched; it might still be possible for him to draw the money on the deposit receipt. Second, I might apply again to Robbie. Or, third, I might dare everything, go to the Assembly Ball, and speak with Flora under the eyes of all Edinburgh. This last alternative, involving as it did the most horrid risks, and the delay of forty-eight hours, I did but glance at with an averted head, and turned again to the consideration of the others. It was the likeliest thing in the world that Robbie had been warned to have no more to do with me. The whole policy of the Gilchrists was in the hands of Chevenix; and I thought this was a precaution so elementary that he was certain to have taken it. If he had not, of course I was all right: Robbie would manage to communicate with Flora; and by four o'clock I might be on the south road and, I was going to say, a free man. Lastly, I must assure myself with my own eyes whether the bank in George Street were beleagured.

I called to Rowley and questioned him tightly as to the appearance of the Bow Street officer.

"What sort of a looking man is he, Rowley?" I asked, as I began to dress.

"Wot sort of a looking man he is?"

repeated Rowley. "Well, I don't very well know wot you would say, Mr. Anne. He ain't a beauty, any'ow."

"Is he tall?"

"Tall? Well, no, I shouldn't say *tall*, Mr. Anne."

"Well, then, is he short?"

"Short? No, I don't think I would say he was what you would call *short*. No, not piticular short, sir."

"Then, I suppose he must be about the middle height?"

"Well, you might say it, sir; but not remarkable so."

I smothered an oath.

"Is he clean-shaved?" I tried him again.

"Clean-shaved?" he repeated, with the same air of anxious candor.

"Good heaven, man, don't repeat my words like a parrot!" I cried. "Tell me what the man was like: it is of the first importance that I should be able to recognize him."

"I'm trying to, Mr. Anne. But *clean shaved?* I don't seem to rightly get hold of that p'int. Sometimes it might appear to me like as if he was; and sometimes like as if he wasn't. No, it wouldn't surprise me now if you was to tell me he 'ad a bit o' whisker."

"Was the man red-faced?" I roared, dwelling on each syllable.

"I don't think you need go for to get cross about it, Mr. Anne!" said he. "I'm tellin' you every blessed thing I see! Red-faced? Well, no, not as you would remark upon."

A dreadful calm fell upon me.

"Was he anywise pale?" I asked.

"Well, it don't seem to me as though he were. But I tell you truly, I didn't take much heed to that."

"Did he look like a drinking man?"

"Well, no. If you please, sir, he looked more like an eating one."

"Oh, he was stout, was he?"

"No, sir. I couldn't go so far as that. No, he wasn't not to say *stout*. If anything, lean rather."

I need not go on with the infuriating interview. It ended as it began, except that Rowley was in tears and that I had acquired one fact. The man was drawn for me as being of any height you like to mention, and of any degree of corpulence or leanness; clean shaved or not, as the case might be; the color of his hair Rowley "could not take it upon himself to put a name on;" that of his eyes he thought to have been blue—nay, it was the one point on which he attained to a kind of tearful certainty. "I'll take my davy on it," he asseverated. They proved to have been as black as sloes, very little, and very near together. So much for the evidence of the artless! And the fact, or rather the facts, acquired? Well, they had to do not with the person but with his clothing. The man wore knee-breeches and white stockings; his coat was "some kind of a lightish color—or betwixt that and dark;" and he wore a "moleskin weskit." As if this were not enough, he presently hailed me from my breakfast in a prodigious flutter, and showed me an honest and rather venerable citizen passing in the square.

"That's *him*, sir," he cried, "the very moral of him! Well, this one is better dressed, and p'r'aps a trifle taller; and in the face he don't favor him no ways at all, sir. No, not when I come to look again, 'e don't seem to favor him noways."

"Jackass!" said I, and I think the greatest stickler for manners will admit the epithet to have been justified.

Meanwhile the appearance of my landlady added a great load of anxiety to what I had already suffered. It was plain that she had not slept; equally plain that she had wept copiously. She sighed, she groaned, she drew in her breath, she shook her head, as she waited on table. In short, she seemed in so precarious a state, like a petard three times charged with hysteria, that I did not dare to address her; and stole out of the house on tiptoe, and actually ran downstairs, in the fear that she might call me back. It was plain that this degree of tension could not last long. It was my first care to go to George Street, which I reached (by good luck) as a boy was taking down the bank shutters. A man was conversing with him; he had white stockings and a moleskin waistcoat, and was as ill-looking a rogue as you would want to see in a day's journey. This seemed to agree fairly well with Rowley's *signalement:* he had declared emphatically (if you remember), and had stuck to it besides, that the companion of the great Lavender was no beauty.

Thence I made my way to Mr. Robbie's, where I rang the bell. A servant answered the summons, and told me the lawyer was engaged, as I had half expected.

"Wha shall I say was callin'?" she pursued; and when I told her "Mr. Ducie," "I think this'll be for you, then?" she added, and handed me a letter from the hall table. It ran:

"DEAR MR. DUCIE,

"My single advice to you is to leave *quam primum* for the South.

"Yours,

T. ROBBIE."

That was short and sweet. It emphatically extinguished hope in one direction. No more was to be gotten of Robbie; and I wondered, from my heart, how much had been told him. Not too much, I hoped, for I liked the lawyer who had thus deserted me, and I placed a certain reliance in the discretion of Chevenix. He would not be merciful; on the other hand, I did not think he would be cruel without cause.

It was my next affair to go back along George Street, and assure myself whether the man in the moleskin vest was still on guard. There was no sign of him on the pavement. Spying the door of a common stair nearly opposite the bank, I took it in my head that this would be a good point of observation, crossed the street, entered with a businesslike air, and fell immediately against the man in the moleskin vest. I stopped and apologized to him; he replied in an unmistakable English accent, thus putting the matter beyond doubt. After this encounter I must, of course, ascend to the top story, ring the bell of a suite of apartments, inquire for Mr. Vavasour, learn (with no great surprise) that he did not live there, come down again, and, again politely saluting the man from Bow Street, make my escape at last into the street.

I was now driven back upon the Assembly Ball. Robbie had failed me. The bank was watched; it would never do to risk Rowley in that neighborhood. All I could do was to wait until the morrow evening, and present myself at the Assembly, let it end as it might. But I must say I came to this decision with a good deal of genuine fright; and here I came for the first time to one of those places where my courage stuck. I do not mean that my courage boggled and made a bit of a bother over it, as it did over the escape from the Castle; I mean, stuck, like a stop watch or a dead man. Certainly I would go to the ball; certainly I must see this morning about my clothes. That was all decided. But the most of the shops were on the other side of the valley, in the Old Town; and it was now my strange discovery that I was physically unable to cross the North Bridge! It was as though a precipice had stood between us, or the deep sea had intervened. Nearer to the Castle my legs refused to bear me.

I told myself this was mere superstition; I made wagers with myself—and gained them; I went down on the esplanade of Princes Street, walked and stood there, alone and conspicuous, looking across the garden at the old gray bastions of the fortress, where all these troubles had begun. I cocked my hat, set my hand on my hip, and swaggered on the pavement, confronting detection. And I found I could do all this with a sense of exhilaration that was not unpleasing and with a certain *cranerie* of manner that raised me in my own esteem. And yet there was one thing I could not bring my mind to face up to, or my limbs to execute; and that was to cross the valley into the Old Town. It seemed to me I must be arrested immediately if I had done so; I must go straight into the twilight of a prison cell, and pass straight thence to the gross and final embraces of the nightcap and the halter. And yet it was from no reasoned fear of the consequences that I could not go. I was unable. My horse baulked, and there was an end!

My nerve was gone: here was a discovery for a man in such imminent peril, set down to so desperate a game, which I could only hope to win by continual luck and unflagging effrontery! The strain had been too long continued, and my nerve was gone. I fell into what they call panic fear, as I have seen soldiers do on the alarm of a night attack, and turned out of Princes Street at random as though the devil were at my heels. In St. Andrew's Square, I remember vaguely hearing some one call out. I paid no heed, but pressed on blindly. A moment after, a hand fell heavily on my shoulder, and I thought I had fainted. Certainly the world went black about me for some seconds; and when that spasm passed I found myself standing face to face with the "cheerful extravagant," in what sort of disarray I really dare not imagine, dead white at least, shaking like an aspen, and mowing at the man with speechless lips. And this was the soldier of Napoleon, and the gentleman who intended going next night to an Assembly Ball! I am the more particular in telling of my breakdown, because it was my only experience of the sort; and it is a good tale for officers. I will allow no man to call me coward; I have made my proofs; few men more. And yet I (come of the best blood in France and inured to danger from a child) did, for some ten or twenty minutes, make this hideous exhibition of myself on

the streets of the New Town of Edinburgh.

With my first available breath I begged his pardon. I was of an extremely nervous disposition, recently increased by late hours; I could not bear the slightest start.

He seemed much concerned. "You must be in a devil of a state!" said he; "though of course it was my fault—damnably silly, vulgar sort of thing to do! A thousand apologies! But you really must be run down; you should consult a medico. My dear sir, a hair of the dog that bit you is clearly indicated. A touch of Blue Ruin, now? Or, come: it's early, but is man the slave of hours? what do you say to a chop and a bottle in Dumbreck's Hotel?"

I refused all false comfort; but when he went on to remind me that this was the day when the University of Cramond met; and to propose a five-mile walk into the country and a dinner in the company of young asses like himself, I began to think otherwise. I had to wait until to-morrow evening, at any rate; this might serve as well as anything else to bridge the dreary hours. The country was the very place for me; and walking is an excellent sedative for the nerves. Remembering poor Rowley, feigning a cold in our lodgings and immediately under the guns of the formidable and now doubtful Bethiah, I asked if I might bring my servant. "Poor devil! it is dull for him," I explained.

"The merciful man is merciful to his ass," observed my sententious friend. "Bring him by all means!

> 'The harp, his sole remaining joy,
> Was carried by an orphan boy;'

and I have no doubt the orphan boy can get some cold victuals in the kitchen, while the Senatus dines."

Accordingly, being now quite recovered from my unmanly condition, except that nothing could yet induce me to cross the North Bridge, I arranged for my ball dress at a shop in Leith Street, where I was not served ill, cut out Rowley from his seclusion, and was ready along with him at the trysting place, the corner of Duke Street and York Place, by a little after two. The University was represented in force: eleven persons, including ourselves, Byfield the aëronaut, and the tall lad, Forbes, whom I had met on the Sunday morning, bedewed with tallow, at the "Hunter's Tryst." I was introduced; and we set off by may of Newhaven and the sea beach; at first through pleasant country roads, and afterwards along a succession of bays of a fairylike prettiness, to our destination —Cramond on the Almond—a little hamlet on a little river, embowered in woods, and looking forth over a great flat of quicksand to where a little islet stood planted in the sea. It was miniature scenery, but charming of its kind. The air of this good February afternoon was bracing, but not cold. All the way my companions were skylarking, jesting, and making puns, and I felt as if a load had been taken off my lungs and spirits, and skylarked with the best of them.

Byfield I observed, because I had heard of him before and seen his advertisements, not at all because I was disposed to feel interest in the man. He was dark and bilious and very silent; frigid in his manners, but burning internally with a great fire of excitement; and he was so good as to bestow a good deal of his company and conversation (such as it was) upon myself, who was not in the least grateful. If I had known how I was to be connected with him in the immediate future, I might have taken more pains.

In the hamlet of Cramond there is a hostelry of no very promising appearance, and here a room had been prepared for us, and we sat down to table.

"Here you will find no guttling or gormandising, no turtle or nightingales' tongues," said the extravagant, whose name, by the way, was Dalmahoy. "The device, sir, of the University of Cramond is Plain Living and High Drinking."

Grace was said by the Professor of Divinity, in a macaronic Latin, which I could by no means follow, only I could hear it rhymed, and I guessed it to be more witty than reverent. After which the *Senatus Academicus* sat down to rough plenty in the shape of rizzar'd haddocks and mustard, a sheep's head, a haggis, and other delicacies of Scotland. The dinner was washed down with brown stout in bottle, and as soon as the cloth was removed, glasses, boiling water, sugar, and whisky were set out for the manufacture of toddy. I played a good knife and fork, did not shun the bowl, and took part, so far as I was able, in the continual fire of pleasantry with which the meal was seasoned. Greatly daring, I ventured, before all these Scotsmen, to tell Sim's tale of Tweedie's dog; and I was held to have done such extraordinary justice to the dialect, "for a Southron," that I was

immediately voted into the Chair of Scots, and became, from that moment, a full member of the University of Cramond. A little after, I found myself entertaining them with a song; and a little after—perhaps a little in consequence—it occurred to me that I had had enough, and would be very well inspired to take French leave. It was not difficult to manage, for it was nobody's business to observe my movements, and conviviality had banished suspicion.

I got easily forth of the chamber, which reverberated with the voices of these merry and learned gentlemen, and breathed a long breath. I had passed an agreeable afternoon and evening, and I had apparently escaped scot free. Alas! when I looked into the kitchen, there was my monkey, drunk as a lord, toppling on the edge of the dresser, and performing on the flageolet to an audience of the house lasses and some neighboring ploughmen.

I routed him promptly from his perch, stuck his hat on, put his instrument in his pocket, and set off with him for Edinburgh. His limbs were of paper, his mind quite in abeyance; I must uphold and guide him, prevent his frantic dives, and set him continually on his legs again. At first he sang wildly, with occasional outbursts of causeless laughter. Gradually an inarticulate melancholy succeeded; he wept gently at times; would stop in the middle of the road, say firmly, "No, no, no," and then fall on his back; or else address me solemnly as "M'lord," and fall on his face by way of variety. I am afraid I was not always so gentle with the little pig as I might have been, but really the position was unbearable. We made no headway at all, and I suppose we were scarce gotten a mile away from Cramond, when the whole *Senatus Academicus* was heard hailing and doubling the pace to overtake us.

Some of them were fairly presentable; and they were all Christian martyrs compared to Rowley; but they were in a frolicsome and rollicking humor that promised danger as we approached the town. They sang songs, they ran races, they fenced with their walking-sticks and umbrellas; and, in spite of this violent exercise, the fun grew only the more extravagant with the miles they traversed. Their drunkenness was deep-seated and permanent, like fire in a peat; or rather—to be quite just to them—it was not so much to be called drunkenness at all, as the effect of youth and high spirits—a fine night, and the night young, a good road under foot, and the world before you!

I had left them once somewhat unceremoniously; I could not attempt it a second time; and, burthened as I was with Mr. Rowley, I was really glad of assistance. But I saw the lamps of Edinburgh draw near on their hill-top with a good deal of uneasiness, which increased, after we had entered the lighted streets, to positive alarm. All the passers-by were addressed, some of them by name. A worthy man was stopped by Forbes. "Sir," said he, "in the name of the Senatus of the University of Cramond, I confer upon you the degree of LL.D.," and with the words he bonneted him. Conceive the predicament of St. Ives, committed to the society of these outrageous youths, in a town where the police and his cousin were both looking for him! So far, we had pursued our way unmolested, although raising a clamor fit to wake the dead; but at last, in Abercromby Place, I believe—at least it was a crescent of highly respectable houses fronting on a garden—Byfield and I, having fallen somewhat in the rear with Rowley, came to a simultaneous halt. Our ruffians were beginning to wrench off bells and doorplates!

"Oh, I say!" says Byfield, "this is too much of a good thing! Confound it, I'm a respectable man—a public character, by George! I can't afford to get taken up by the police."

"My own case exactly," said I.

"Here, let's bilk them," said he.

And we turned back and took our way down hill again.

It was none too soon: voices and alarm-bells sounded; watchmen here and there began to spring their rattles; it was plain the University of Cramond would soon be at blows with the police of Edinburgh! Byfield and I, running the semi-inanimate Rowley before us, made good despatch, and did not stop till we were several streets away, and the hubbub was already softened by distance.

"Well, sir," said he, "we are well out of that! Did ever any one see such a pack of young barbarians?"

"We are properly punished, Mr. Byfield; we had no business there," I replied.

"No, indeed, sir, you may well say that! Outrageous! And my ascension announced for Saturday, you know!" cried the aëronaut. "A pretty scandal! Byfield the aëronaut at the police-court! Tut-tut! Will you be able to get your

rascal home, sir? Allow me to offer you my card. I am staying at Walker and Poole's Hotel, sir, where I should be pleased to see you."

"The pleasure would be mutual, sir," said I; but I must say my heart was not in my words, and as I watched Mr. Byfield departing, I desired nothing less than to pursue the acquaintance.

One more ordeal remained for me to pass. I carried my senseless load upstairs to our lodging, and was admitted by the landlady in a tall white night-cap and with an expression singularly grim. She lighted us into the sitting-room; where, when I had seated Rowley in a chair, she dropped me a cast-iron courtesy. I smelt gunpowder on the woman. Her voice tottered with emotion.

"I give ye nottice, Mr. Ducie," said she. "Dacent folks' houses . . ."

And at that, apparently, temper cut off her utterance, and she took herself off without more words.

I looked about me at the room, the goggling Rowley, the extinguished fire; my mind reviewed the laughable incidents of the day and night; and I laughed out loud to myself—lonely and cheerless laughter!

At this point the story breaks off, having been laid aside by the author some weeks before his death. The argument of the few chapters remaining to be written was known to his stepdaughter and amanuensis, Mrs. Strong, who has been good enough to supply materials for the following summary:

Anne goes to the Assembly Ball, and there meets Chevenix, Ronald, Flora, and Flora's aunt. Anne is very daring and impudent, Flora very anxious and agitated. The Bow Street runner is on the stairs, and presently the Vicomte de St. Yves is announced. Anne contrives to elude them and to make an appointment with Flora that she should meet him with his money the next day at a solitary place near Swanston. They keep the appointment, and have a long interview, Flora giving him his money packet. They are disturbed by a gathering crowd in the neighborhood, and learn accidentally that a balloon ascent is about to take place close at hand. Perceiving Ronald and Chevenix, Anne leaves Flora and forces his way into the thickest of the crowd, hoping thus to evade pursuit. But the Bow Street runner and the rest of his pursuers follow him up to the balloon itself. The ropes are about to be cut when Anne, after a moment's whispered conversation with the aëronaut, leaps into the car as the balloon rises. The course of the balloon takes it over the British channel, where it descends, and the voyagers are picked up by an American privateer and carried to the United States. Thence St. Ives makes his way to France.

Meanwhile Rowley, with the help of Mr. Robbie, busies himself successfully at Edinburgh to bring about an investigation into the circumstances attending Goguelat's death. Chevenix, conceiving that Anne would never return, and wishing to appear in a magnanimous light before Flora, comes forward as the principal witness, and, by telling what he knows of the duel, clears his rival of the criminal charge hanging over him.

Upon the restoration of the monarchy, the Vicomte de St. Yves being discredited and ruined, Anne comes into possession of his ancestral domains, and returns to Edinburgh in due form and state to claim and win Flora as his bride.

S. C.

THE END.